

Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



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New High School Makes Waste Reduction a Priority

The Member

Stone Memorial High School in rural Cumberland County opened for the 2006-07 school year with 932 students and 60 faculty. Annell Fields, Biology/ Ecology teacher and club sponsor, brought her recycling experience from her former school and determined to involve students in making the new school environmentally friendly. Reducing solid waste was the obvious place to start.

The Story

Indoor recycling bins were purchased with Ecology club and Science Department funds. 100% of Ecology students pitch in each week to empty the classroom bins and work sites throughout the building. In September and January, Ecology classes visited the local Recycling Center on field trips. The Environmental Education coordinator led students on a tour of the facility. She explained the need for recycling at home, schools and businesses. She asked students to participate in the October 14, 2006, Household Hazardous Waste Pick up. Five students volunteered to help that day with traffic control and filling out surveys.

Everything was going well until the county called in December to say that the truck being used to pick up recyclables had broken down, and the new truck was not designed to pick up the old dumpster at Stone Memorial. A new larger dumpster would be needed, but the county budget did not include this expense.

The Success

Faced with the dilemma of no way to recycle the enormous volume of waste being collected each week, 50 Ecology students organized a letter-writing campaign to persuade the County mayor to purchase a new larger dumpster for recyclables. Impressed by the student interest and participation, the county mayor sent the letters to the Solid Waste director. He approved the plan to buy the 35 cubic yard unit, and the County Commission gave final approval to spend the \$7,000 needed.

The new unit was delivered in January 2007 and located behind the building near the cafeteria. Cafeteria staff takes out

the recycled cardboard daily. The solid waste department collects the material, and Cumberland County Recycling Center benefits from the sale of the material.



The end of the year locker clean-out provided an opportunity for re-use. Items left by students were collected, sorted, washed, and prepared for redistribution to teachers and students. The vocational rehab instructor redistributed calculators, colored pencils, notebooks, and graph paper. The 32 loads of laundry created a clothes closet for students in need of t-shirts, jeans or coats. 100 pairs of shoes were retrieved and kept out of the landfill.

Sixty Ecology students participated in an all-day stream clean-up for Earth Day on May 9, 2007. City of Crossville Engineering Dept. Stormwater Management Team and Veolia Water sponsored the students' work by providing drinks, pizza, t-shirts, reusable water bottles and goody bags. Students removed litter from the river and completed trail maintenance for the student-built Hemlock Trail on the wild and scenic Obed River that runs through Crossville.

The Pollution Prevented

During the 2006-07 school year, 22.5 tons of cardboard and 27 tons of mixed paper were recycled at Stone Memorial High School. The locker clean-out initiative diverted 100 pairs of shoes, 32 loads of clothes, and many school supplies from the landfill for re-use.

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